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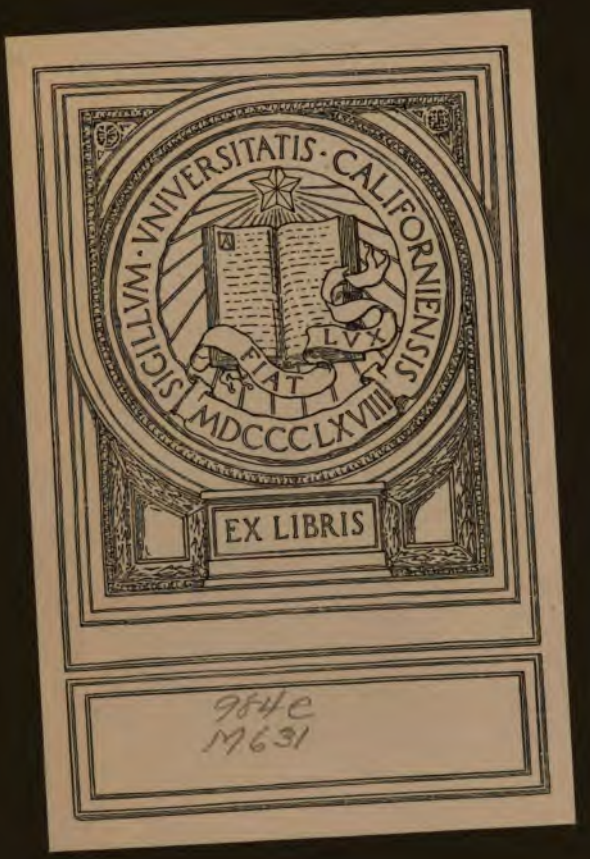

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CHURCH DEBTS

—OR—

THE WAY TO PAY THEM.

A SERMON,

Preached November 21st, 1886,

—BY—

THE REV. CHARLES S. LEE,

RECTOR OF ST. PETER'S CHURCH,

SAN FRANCISCO.

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CHURCH DEBTS AND HOW TO PAY THEM.

"And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment; that ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ; being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are, by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God." Philippians i, 9, 10, 11.

CHURCH DEBTS. I am going to speak very plainly of Church Debts to-night. For some time I have waited for an opportunity of doing so, and the opportunity is now given me in the double fact that this is the last Sunday in the Church year, the time to cast up accounts and make new beginnings, and that on this Twenty-second Sunday after Trinity, the Church in her Gospel and Epistle has something to say of debts and debtors. And because one of the rubrics in the Prayer Book prevented my reading this Gospel and Epistle this morning, I have read to you the Gospel as the second lesson for this evening, and you have heard the Epistle read in connection with the text of this sermon. On the subject of debts and debtors the Gospel is direct. The Epistle apparently is less direct; only apparently however, for I hope to show you shortly how pertinent the text is to the question of church indebtedness and the way in which that indebtedness should be met and paid.

"And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment; that ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ; being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are, by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God."

"And this I pray." It is characteristic of St. Paul that in his

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thanksgivings and prayers, he always thanks God for what is best and strongest in those churches to which he writes, and always prays God for what is worst and weakest. The Christians at Philippi were, it would seem, an enthusiastic and a large hearted set of people. So much so, in fact, that while St. Paul thanks God that they were so, yet he feels it necessary to pray God that these virtues may not grow into vices, but rather be pruned and kept in bounds by knowledge, by clear perception, by sound judgment: In short St. Paul prays that the enthusiastic side of the Christian character may be held in check by the thoughtful side; that the heart may not run away with the head. And this prayer of St. Paul's has three distinct parts. First—there is the direct prayer that the Philippians' love for God "may abound in *knowledge* and in all *judgment*." Then follows a prayer for the direct consequence of the first, that having received knowledge and judgment, they "may approve things that are excellent;" *i. e.*, they may choose good and proper ways of showing their abounding love. And last comes a prayer that having been taught of God true theories and proper practices they may, in their application of both, "be sincere and without offence."

And now, dear brethren, I apply this prayer of St. Paul's to you. It has often been my prayer for you, and so it will be so long as I shall minister unto you. And so I want you to understand what bearing it has upon Church debts, especially upon our Church debt. And first I want you to understand what is meant by "love abounding in knowledge and judgment."

I. Love here means works of love. Not the emotion, not the inward grace, (though that perhaps is the prime requisite,) but the outward visible sign and expression of love. As to the ways and means of this expression I shall speak further on. I now emphasize the fact that the expression of love in Christian lives should be an abounding expression—the rich growth of a tropical, rather than the stunted growth of an arctic heart. And Christian love should not only abound, but abound freely—"more and more." It is a significant fact that the greek work translated "abound," means to "bound over," to "overleap," to "*over-flow*." Our works of love done in God's name and for His sake should overflow, should rise

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as naturally and freely from the heart as the spring welling from the heart of the mountain, not dribble like a block of ice under the focus of a burning glass. And then too, this overflowing love should not be allowed to run to waste, but should be turned into proper and legitimate channels of usefulness.

You have seen, some of you, the living stream, that sang, and laughed, and danced 'neath summer suns, lifeless and still in winter's shroud. The busy wheels, the hum, and buzz, and clash, and clatter along its banks, these too are hushed and dead. But with the gentle wooing of the spring; with balmy sighs and tepid tears, the heart of ice has melted, and with a mighty bound the prisoned stream has burst its bonds and rushed tumultuously in its newborn freedom. Rushed how? Rushed whither? Here? There? Anywhere? Roaring over its banks? Hissing at human life? Gorged with human property? An instrument of death and desolation? Waking an echo of wailing for the dead and the ruined? Is it thus that the overflow has passed? It may have been. It has not often been when its course was guided by a knowledge and by a judgment not its own. Knowledge and judgment, these God-given powers have guided the rushing flood into its appointed gates and channels. Frozen veins and arteries thrill anew with life; wheels, and shafts, and belts revolve; looms whistle in shrilly glee, saws hum their diapason, and the anthem of industry rises again where, but for knowledge and judgment, might have risen the dirge of death.

And Christian love, Godly love, the "living water" has its proper channels too. All along the stream of time, here a flood-gate, there a course into which the love that Christians bear to God may safely, wisely, and healthfully be turned. Turned to refresh and invigorate, not to weary and desecrate God's inheritance; God's children and God's church. Knowledge and judgment are to determine of what sort and character these gates and channels shall be;—a Godly knowledge, *i. e.*, a knowledge of God's will and God's ways; a righteous judgment, *i. e.*, a clear perception of what is right and true to the line of God's will and God's ways. Knowledge and judgment, these should be the guides of that overflowing love which Christians should feel and express for the

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God of love; for the Father Who has created them, for the Son Who has redeemed them, and for the Spirit Who sanctifieth them and all the people of God.

Should. You think there are too many "shoulds" in that last sentence. So do I. But that is not my fault. Would to God I might say, knowledge and judgment *are* the guides of that love which Christians *do* feel for God. But I cannot. For, is the love which Christians profess for God and God's Church always guided by a Godly knowledge and a righteous judgment? Does this love in its expression, always manifest itself in ways of approved excellence? And is the result of such manifestation to engender sincerity, peace, and the fruits of righteousness? I may be wrong, if so I am ready to stand corrected, but I believe that in very many instances it is and does not. In the instance of Church Debts, I believe that the means resorted to (and pardon the irony of the word) for the *paying* of these debts by people calling and professing themselves Christians, are often more disgraceful than the fact of the debt itself. I do not say that a Church debt is a disgraceful fact. A Church debt may often be the resultant of an equally wise and necessary policy. It becomes a disgraceful fact only, when no legitimate effort is made to pay it on the part of those who have contracted it or who are bounden by it. It was no disgrace that the servant in the parable owed his lord ten thousand talents, for he proposed to pay his debt, and his lord accepted his petition for time on the ground of good security. But it would have been a disgrace if that servant, possessing as he did securities convertible into cash, had declared himself a bankrupt and repudiated his debt, or, what is much the same thing, taken no steps to pay it in whole or in part. And so, I am not one of those who hold it a crying disgrace that a church should have a debt upon it, so long as a wise and proper foresight shall have dictated when and how, in the course of legitimate business, that debt shall be paid. But I am, and I trust I shall always be, one of those who hold it a burning, blushing shame, that so many professed Christians snap their purses shut against the legitimate claims of God's Church and hold them agape to those illegitimate children of a charity falsely so called—that spurious brood, born of a

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miserly meanness and suckled at the breast of a lustful selfishness —the Church Fair, the Church Concert, the Church Lunch, the Church Entertainment, and a train of other unchristened evils. I hold that the Christian love (God save the mark!) that flows only through such channels, must, if it look upon God's great love-gift at all, look upon it as a mummery or a burlesque: Must look upon Christ on His cross as a dummy Christ; must look upon His blood, and tears, and cries, as stage blood, and tears, and cries; upon the thunder, and the lightning, and the darkness as clever scenic effects in the hands of scheming apostolic property-men; upon the preaching of the passion as an intellectual or emotional mockery; upon the claims of the Church of God as an intermittent and a frequent nuisance. Oh! Brethren! If God's love and sacrifice for us be, as we believe it is, a reality, let our love and sacrifice for God be a reality as well. Aye! let it be a *reality*, for too often and too generally it is not. What is the ruling spirit of evil in the Church to-day? Without fear of successful contradiction I submit that spirit is a spirit of selfishness. Of old it was "God and my rights." To-day it too often is "My rights and my God." Self first, God afterwards. *My* house first, my Father's afterwards. The world first, the Saviour of the world afterwards. My comfort first, the Comforter afterwards. Aye! the ruling spirit of evil in the Church to-day is a spirit of selfishness strangling that spirit of divine unselfishness, that spirit of Christ, without which man or church is none of His. And in support of such a statement I submit there is perhaps no greater cause of offense in the Church to-day, than that Church people are asked to acknowledge their indebtedness to Almighty God and to pay it. I submit further, the fact that such a demand and such a claim is a cause of offense argues little for the professed love and integrity of congregations and of individuals. And I believe that out of such a spirit of selfishness the Church Fair has sprung into being. It is claimed that the Church Fair *et al* are necessary evils. I deny that claim. I believe it is false. But if these things be necessary evils, it seems to me we must often seek the cause among the ranks of the ministers and stewards of the Household of God. May it not be that a well intentioned yielding to parish sentiment,

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influence, or custom, has at last, so shrivelled hearts and calloused consciences, that the Church Fair is so largely regarded to-day, if not as a necessary good, then as a necessary evil? Speaking only for myself, I believe that such is indeed the case. And hence it is that to-day so many clergymen are lean and hungry of visage, out at the elbows and down at the heel; so many churches are steepled with mortgages and hung with red tape; so many charities are hobbling on crutches or gasping for breath; not because people are too poor to build churches, or to support ministers, or to maintain charities, but because, in many cases, under a mistaken estimate or a weak enforcement of the claims of God upon the individual soul, they have become too mean; not because lips do not profess love for Christ, but because hearts are empty of Him, and full of self. Oh! be sure it is not because of hard times that so many church debts remain unpaid, but because of hypocritical times; not because of scarcity of cash, but because of superfluity of cant. Yet these debts must be paid, and because they must it is urged that it is better to pay them by the Church Fair, etc., than to allow them to stand unpaid; money is money no matter where it comes from, no matter how it comes. I cannot hold such a view. Because it seems to me to be better, so far as honor due to God is concerned, that a house of His should pass under the hammer than His Holy Name be used as an omnibus to drag people to the play house, the dance house, the fair house, or the eating house. If people do not care enough about God's house and God's religion to pay directly for the building of the one and the support of the other, I do not say that such people should not have a church or a religion, for they are just the ones who most need those things, but I do say they do not deserve either. I suppose that it will be granted that the work of God upon earth is to be supported by Christian Charity and prosecuted in Christian Honesty. Therefore, if the church fair, etc, be really a part of God's work, then I submit that each ticket to each fair, etc. should bear upon its face the imprint: "For the Benefit of God Almighty and the Church of Jesus Christ His Only Son, our Lord." That would at least be honest whatever else it might be. I am well aware that those words do not sound prop-

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erly in Christian ears. Why not? Because the thing they speak of is an *improper thing*. Because, if it were proper and right to hold a church fair to the greater glory of God and for the advancement of His Kingdom upon earth, there would be no offense given or taken in stating just what such an entertainment was for. I challenge any conscientious clergyman in this city to print on his tickets the direct unvarnished statement of what this or that entertainment given by his parish is for. He dare not do it. Such a ticket would be a blasphemy. Can the entertainment then be a thing according to Godly knowledge or righteous judgment? The tickets generally will read: For the benefit of the Church Debt; For the benefit of the Organ Fund; the Choir Fund; the new pews, doors, windows, carpet, cushions, bell, or spire. But the sermons and notices generally will read, For the Glory and Praise of God. I challenge those clergymen who instigate, foster, or aquiesce in the raising of money for God's work by the church fair etc., to make their admission tickets square with their sermons and notices. This, I think, brings us face to face with the whole point in the matter. That point is:—What is the specific object of these parochial church entertainments? Is it not to raise money for the service of God in some form or other? And because many men and women, professedly Christians, will not *give* their money to God from a sense of love and duty, is it not a fact that, rather than go without that money, many clergymen are willing to appeal, and do appeal, to these people's sense of selfishness and worldliness? God knows how far I am from the line of His will, but I would just as soon offer Him, on His altar, Judas Iscariot's blood-money, and sing the Doxology over it, as to offer Him money which had already been offered on the altar of mammon. Among protestant communions there is no lack of harsh and acrid criticism of the Jesuits and of their policy. And yet on every hand are Protestant clergy advocating in the church fair, etc., the motto which is the keystone of Jesuitry, that the end justifies the means; yes, and deprecating the means in one breath while advocating them in another. The end is held to be the glory and the praise of God. What are the means? They are schemes for extracting gold and silver from the tailings of a worked-out Christian liberality.

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In a greater or lesser degree every church fair, concert, opera, ball, lunch, or what not, is a begging scheme. Like some curb-stone cripple with placarded breast and tintinnabulating cup, so do these schemes place the Creator, and the Redeemer, and the Sanctifier before the world—a beggar whining and jingling for an alms. Whereas I believe if some of those who proudly claim to be the representatives of the Crucified Son of God, and the stewards of His kingdom upon earth, would have the manhood and the honesty to preach (as did their Lord and Master) God's claims upon the soul and life we should have less of church debts and more of Christian love and life; less of the Church Fair and more of the Fair Church; less of sour ferment and more of blessed peace; less of hypocrisy and more of truth; less of mammon and more of Christ, than we have to-day. No doubt most, if not all, who take part in these church fairs etc. mean well. No doubt most, if not all, love God's work and are zealous in it, but their love and their zeal I submit is not according to Godly knowledge or righteous judgment. Quite innocently, it may be, yet, none the less surely, they are sowing, if not in their own hearts then in the hearts of others, the seed of selfishness, and as is the sowing such shall the harvest be. And so I believe that the payment of church debts and the furtherance of God's work in the parish by the instrumentality of the church fair, etc., is a thoroughly pernicious principle; a principle not warranted by the Word of God, but rather condemned by that spirit of self-sacrifice which is the Spirit of Christ who is in all things the Head and pattern of His Church.

As a principle, therefore, I submit, the church fair etc., cannot be approved among those labors of love which are excellent and acceptable in the sight of Almighty God.

II. And not only as a principle but as a practice. For I submit again, without fear of successful contradiction, that the church fair, etc., is a fruitful source of discord, envy and strife, and often tends, if not to immorality, certainly to immodesty and effrontery. It engenders a love of display, and so a spirit of extravagance, vanity, and jealousy. It forces young women, (for among these are its active spirits chiefly found,) into relationships with men of

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unknown or of questionable character. Some years ago at an entertainment of this character in this city I saw a young girl from whose cheek no wanton hand had brushed the bloom of innocence, passing badinage while selling a spray of lily of the valley to a man whom I knew to be a profligate, and who, as I ascertained later, did not know this young girl. That instance I believe to be a type of many others. I have known young men who attended church fairs etc., not to aid Christian works, but to drag Christian workers down to the slime and ooze of a guilty knowledge. I have known of parishes divided, friendships rended, and hearths blackened with a soot of hell, and the cause was directly or indirectly traceable to the church entertainment. And so, as a man who has seen much of the world and its ways, I can assure you, without substantiating my assurance by revolting detail, that in these entertainments, especially when given upon an extended scale, there is generally present more of evil than of good. And so I oppose them not only in principle but in practice.

III. I oppose them too on another ground, a very practical ground. I oppose the church fair etc., as a means of church or parish support, or of paying church or parish debts, because I believe that the adoption of such means is the adoption of a bad business policy.

Certainly in adopting the church fair etc., as a business policy there is displayed more often than not perhaps, a lack of knowledge and of judgment. Because, from a business standpoint, the church fair, etc., is what is known in the phrase of the street as "a gamble." It is as much a game of chance as faro is. There is a chance of financial success, there is also a chance of financial failure. After the curtain has dropped, or the last dish been dried, you may be in or out of pocket. If you are "in" then as a business proposition, well and good. But if you are "out" what are you going to do about it? There stands the debt; that ghost that has haunted you for the last six months—there it stands grinning as sardonically as ever. Very possibly its grin is on a more extended scale than before. What are you going to do? Let the debt grin and bear it? That might do if the hilarity would communicate itself to the creditors. Unfortunately creditors have a

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very matter of fact way of looking at these little matters. Creditors seldom smile until they are paid. And so you find, as the saying goes, that you have "got to do something." Well, what are you going to do? Give another entertainment? A burned child dreads the fire. Besides your energies are exhausted, your spirit broken. You must wait another six months before you can revive your energies and mend your spirit; unless, perhaps, you happen to be a clergyman, one of those happy beings whose energies are ever active, whose spirit is never broken. That makes it all right. You know what to do now. You stand in the middle of the chancel on the following Sunday, and you say something like this: "This is *your* debt, a debt which you owe to Almighty God. Are you going to pay it; or are you going to repudiate it? Do you propose to live on the principle 'owe no man anything but to love one another,' or do you propose to file your petition in spiritual bankruptcy?" That is all that remains to you so far as I can see. And if such an attitude as that be too often necessary, how much better at the very outset to stand fairly and squarely upon the principle it contains, than, at some eleventh hour, to be forced into doing so by the inexorable pressure of relentless circumstances.

Then again: when you have a debt to pay, say of $3,000, is it good business to spend $6,000 in order that you may pay $3,000? Suppose some relentless creditor should take you by the throat saying "pay me that thou owest," would you consider it good business to go out on the street and borrow the money on a promissory note of thirty days with interest at one hundred per cent? Certainly you would not. And yet that is the identical policy upon which many Church people and parishes are acting to-day. I believe, from actual figures and from highly probable calculation, that the Church people of this city have very lately spent some $20,000, that they might make about $6,500. Now just think of that. Within a few weeks Church people of this city have paid out of their own pockets some $20,500, in order that they might get out of the pockets of the public about $6,000. Is that good business? One church in this city is apparently a gainer by about $6,500. But the people of that church and of other churches have

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spent about $20,000, Now I want you to think of another fact. If that $20,000 had been given outright by the participants, boothers, and church attendants at the late carnival, it would have paid just about two-thirds of the total parish debts of this city.

"Oh! but you forget one thing," I fancy I can hear some one say, "you forget that it wouldn't have been given outright." No I do not forget. I believe that if a decided stand was made in this matter; if the love of Christians (and there is plenty of love and zeal afloat in this diocese) were properly appealed to that the result would equal if not exceed the result of an appeal to selfishness.

And now in view of the debt that each individual of each of our city parishes owes to Almighty God, how does the account stand? I believe it will stand something like this: Church of the Coming of Christ, Church of the Triune God, Church of the Gift of the Spirit, Church of the Beloved Disciple, Church of the Apostle to the Gentiles, Church of the Good Physician, Church of the First Martyr, Church of the Keeper of the Keys, *Drs.* To Foreign Missions, To Domestic Missions, To Diocesan Missions, To Diocesan Charities, To Church Improvements, To Church Offerings, To Parish Debts, about $10,000, more or less. I do not say that this sum would have been given to any or all these objects; but in view of the fact that a sum nearly or more than twice as large has been given to the noble army of carpenters, caterers, confectioners, car conductors, dressmakes, decorators, hack-drivers, printers, florists *et omne genus*, I do say that the subscriptions and gifts to God's work in one form or other, are going in the logical sequence of events to shrivel, if not evaporate, for some time to come.

Pray understand distinctly: I do not stand here to-night to criticize harshly the ideas and practices of other people, my brethren of the clergy and the laity. I am well aware that many will differ with me, and they have the same right to their opinions as I have to mine. I simply stand here to state to you, my people, my *personal views* on this subject; to say to you that I am profoundly impressed with the justice of those views; that I believe they are well founded: that, so long as I shall so

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believe, I shall stand by them; and that should it ever come to pass that I cannot stand by those views, and at the same time stand by any parish with which I may be associated, I shall certainly, if I at all know myself, stand down and out.

I tried during the late carnival to avoid the appearance of the fact that St. Peter's Parish as a parish was taking part in it. I gave out, what was quite true, that our participants were from a Chapter of our Guild, and that this Chapter alone was concerned in the entertainment. Nevertheless I am now unpleasantly conscious of the fact that the Guild is a Parish Guild and that this U. D. Chapter was and is a part of our parochial machinery, and therefore the Parish and Rector took part, indirectly at least, in the entertainment. Well, for one reason I am glad of it. It is a good thing even when making mistakes, to make them well. So in this case, I say I am glad that after having put our several single feet into it, we decided, not to lend a limping support, but to go into the affair with both feet. And here I want to express my gratitude to all those of you who lent your assistance so freely, so faithfully, and so effectively. I thank you all very heartily for that. But I also want to say here, and now, and once for all, that never again, with my consent or approval, shall this parish take part directly or indirectly in any entertainment of whatever description whose object shall be the raising of money for Parochial Church work, and so for the service of Almighty God. I say this that you may all understand it, and I have told you some of my reasons for saying it. I say it too for another reason:—because there is a debt of $5,600, on this church. That debt is yours and mine. You and I owe $5,600 to Almighty God, and we should pay $5,600 to Almighty God. It is not necessary that we pay it to-night, or to-morrow, or next year, but we should set about paying it without any unnecessary delay. We may pay it in installments as we are able to make them, only for the Glory and Praise of God let us *give* those installments and not *beg* them; for the Glory and Praise of God, let us *pay* our honest debt honestly, not *raise* it. Now, if God gives me health and strength, I want no other parish than this, I want no other people than you. I now promise you that, with your approval and good pleasure, I will

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stand by you and St. Peter's Parish until this debt is paid, unless I should see, what I least expect to see, direct evidence that you intend to repudiate it. But for this debt the parish would to-day be independent. Its present income (which I am proud to say has never been solicited) would meet its current expenses and pay rector's salary sufficient to enable you to call able and energetic men to preach The Word from its pulpit and minister The Word at its altar. And I believe this debt can be paid. I believe that with even a little self-sacrifice and good-will, and above all, unity of purpose and effort, four or five years will see this parish free from debt; and once free, I can promise, for my excellent vestry and for myself, that we will so tie this church property up with red tape that not one shylock in all this city would dare to lend a nickle on it. I believe further, that as a first step towards paying our debt, we are going to place upon that altar on next Easter Day, nearly or quite $1,000. And now I am going to let you all into the great secret of how this is to be done: simply by turning our zeal for God and our love for God into several separate and legitimate channels, and leading it all to the altar on Easter Day. I expect that the quarterly collection for the church debt will foot $100. I expect that the Guild, which is now doing such true and faithful work, will give at least another $100. I expect that the offerings on Christmas Day will be $200, and last, but not least, I expect that the Easter offerings will be $500. That is, all told, $1,000 And *now* is, the time to begin. Advent begins next Sunday. Advent is just as much a season of special devotion, and special self-sacrifice as Lent is. It is the special time to prepare ourselves for the second coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and I know of no better way to prepare for that event, the event of our life, than to lay up treasures in heaven, by building up His kingdom upon earth. Oh! be sure church fairs won't count then—only honest self-sacrifice, and that will count above all else. And so I ask each one of you,—E, A, C, H; Each—to remain after the service to-night and get from me a mite-box for the Advent Season, and to bring it here with you on Christmas Day as your Christmas Gift to your Father in Heaven. I ask you to pay your debt to Him into this little treas-

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ury just as you are able to pay it, no more nor no less. God never asks of you more than you can give, and it may well be that the poorest offering in the sight of man on the Saviour's birthday, will be the richest in the sight of God, Who sees below the gift into the heart of the giver, and estimates its worth, not by its market, but by its spiritual value. Now what I am asking you to do is simply this:—do your duty as God shall show it to you. Care enough about God to kneel to Him and ask Him, "Father, what wilt Thou have *me* to do?" Be sure He will tell you, and be sure the "doing" will then rest with you. That is all I ask of you, and I ask it in God's Name. I hold out no bait to catch gold or silver fish. I am fishing for men, for hearts ready and desirous to overflow with works of love in God's service. And so I do not turn this chancel into a box-office and ask you to buy a ticket for a Fair, or a Concert, or an Opera, or a Play, or a Bazaar, or a Lunch, or for anything else; I simply say to you—Here is a debt of which each one of you with me owes a part to Almighty God—Pay it; Here is the best way in which to pay it—Pay it in this way; Here is a very clear and pressing duty—"Rise, let us be going" to meet it. I believe that is all that is necessary. I believe that it is enough that this congregation be shown its duty and asked to do it. And so I only urge upon you the vital importance of the present opportunity. Act Now. Act while the good impulse sways the heart and mind. Get your mite-box to-night. The spirit of selfishness will have less chance at you if you do, than if you go away empty-handed. In this way I believe we can pay our debt, as the phrase goes, "without feeling it." But even if we do feel it, I don't think it will do us any harm. Self-sacrifice done out of love and duty to God never does any harm. The best, noblest, purest, richest offerings always spring from gratitude. And so, let our love and self-sacrifice to our eternal and ever-merciful Creditor be according to knowledge and judgment. Let us for His sake and in His name approve, choose, this most excellent way of rendering to Him of His own. And, then too, let our expression of abounding love be sincere and without offence. Let our intent and act be purged of all admixture of worldly dross, that in this good work we may

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be honest with ourselves, having a conscience void of offence towards God. Striving to be thus and to do thus we cannot fail to bring forth "the fruits of righteousness;" and these are the only fruits that shall endure; the only fruits worth the growing by the laborer, worth the garnering by the Husbandman. All else shall wither, die, and rot, but the fruits of righteousness these bear seed that will spring up and blossom into Life Eternal. And whatever of these blessed fruits we shall bring forth at this time, or in later years, let us ever remember to bring them forth to the "Glory and Praise of God." The Glory and Praise of God! Ah! that is the key note of the Christian life! That is the whole point in this whole matter! Ah me! if only the lives of God's debtors were tuned to that, their payments would be made in a different spirit, and in a different manner: In the spirit—"All things come of Thee O Lord, and of *Thine own* do *we* GIVE Thee." Ah! yes, there too is the manner! *Give* Thee, even as Thou, O loving Giver of all good things gave Thine Only Begotten Son—freely, willingly, directly.

Oh! holy symbol of that great gift! Oh! the Cross of Christ! Shall we wear it on our brow and not in our heart? Oh! the Glory and Praise of God! Shall we wear that on our lips and not practice it in our lives? Dearly beloved in the Lord, answer, I beseech you, these questions. This is the last Sunday night in the Church year. This is the time for new beginnings,—for forgetting what things are behind in a dead past, and for reaching forth for those things which are before in a living future, for the sake of the high calling that we bear, even the name of Christians; for the sake of the prize that fadeth not away, eternal in the heavens. Oh! let us not delay to answer these questions! Let us not be dumb till the Judgment be set and the books opened, but let us write our answer *now*, and let that answer be on the credit side of the Book of Life, the eternal ledger of God.

C. L. MIEL

ST. PETER'S, Nov. 21, 1886.

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We, the undersigned clergymen of the Diocese of California, do hereby state we are in substantial accord with the views expressed in this sermon, viz: that the Church Fair and kindred entertainments, as means of raising money for Parochial Church Work, are pernicious in principle and harmful in practice. And we recommend to our brethren of the clergy, who think with us in this matter, that they distribute copies of this sermon among their parishioners.

William Ingraham Kip, D.D., LL.D.
Hiram W. Beers, D.D.
Hobart Chetwood.
John A. Emery.
William W. Davis.
D. O. Kelley.

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